Research Notes for James McVey (1780–1868)

Research Overview:

James McVey appears only intermittently in the surviving record, and it is striking that anything is known about his birth at all. Born in the late eighteenth century, he belongs to a period in Ireland where parish and civil records rarely survive. His place of birth—Aghaloo Parish, County Tyrone—is known only from his Canadian grave, a late and indirect source, but one that carries unusual weight given the near-total absence of Irish documentation for men of his generation.

James and his wife, Jeanne Jane Reid, began their married life in Ireland, where their first children were born. Sometime between the births of their younger children, the family immigrated to Montréal, arriving with small children during a period when many immigrant families left little trace. The death of a young child shortly after arrival is documented in Montréal and is among the earliest surviving records of the family. In this case, the French Canadian Catholic parish registers preserved what Ireland did not, recording baptisms and burials that establish the family's presence and continuity at the point when their circumstances were most precarious.

These records introduce a central tension in James McVey's story. His grave identifies his place of birth as Aghaloo Parish, County Tyrone, yet the McEvoy family network documented through later generations is centered in County Roscommon. Extensive DNA evidence confirms that these families are related, ruling out coincidence of surname. The surviving records do not reconcile these facts, but they clearly define the question of how a man born in Tyrone fits within a Roscommon-centered family.

What survives of James McVey's life is therefore both substantial and incomplete. His identity rests on a small number of durable facts—his stated place of birth, the parish records that document his family in Montréal, and the recorded lives of his children—set against large silences about his origins in Ireland. The records hold these fragments together across countries, allowing his life to be traced with confidence even as its beginnings remain unresolved.

Timeline

Abt. 1780 - Birth at Aghaloo Parish, Tyrone, Ireland

Abt. 1804 - Marriage to Jeanne Jane Reid (1786–1846) in Ireland

6 May 1806 - Birth of son John Patrick McEvoy (1806 - 1857)

1810 - Birth of daughter Elisabeth McVey (1810–1894) in Ireland

1812 - Birth of son Martin McEvoy at Aughrim, Roscommon, Ireland

Aug 1815 - Birth of son Hugh McVey (1815–1818)

1812 and 1817 - Immigration from Ireland to Canada

Inferred from the birth of children in Ireland and subsequent records in Canada

13 Apr 1818 - Death of son Hugh McVey (1815–1818) at Montréal, Quebec, Canada

10 Jul 1819 - Birth of daughter Suzanne McVey (1819–1893) at Montréal, Quebec, Canada

17 Apr 1846 - Death of wife Jeanne Jane Reid (1786–1846) Montréal, Quebec, Canada

7 Oct 1857 - Death of son John Patrick McEvoy (1806 - 1857**)** at Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan

25 June 1868 - Death at Longue-Pointe, Montréal, Québec, Canada

A record dated September 20 may refer to this James McVey, but the year is not stated. The associated spouse is listed as either Jane or Anna Reed, and the identification remains uncertain.

Jun 1868 - Burial
Montréal, Québec, Canada